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RUEHAE/AMEMBASSY ASMARA IMMEDIATE 2280  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 000378

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF, AF/E, DS/IP/AF AND DS/IP/ITA  
CJTF-HOA FOR POLAD  
LONDON, PARIS, ROME FOR AFRICA-WATCHER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/17/2032  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [ASEC](#) [PBTS](#) [DJ](#) [ER](#)  
SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI FM PROTESTS ALLEGED ERITREAN INTRUSION  
WITHIN DJIBOUTIAN TERRITORY

REF: DJIBOUTI 377

Classified By: ERIC WONG, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, A.I.

11. (S) SUMMARY. Djibouti Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Yousseuf informed Charge on April 17 that the GODJ sought USG and French assistance to protest the alleged establishment of an Eritrean military outpost on Djiboutian territory, specifically at Dumeira, along the strategic Bab al Mandab strait. Citing the alleged presence of 3,000 Eritrean troops along the border with Djibouti, FM Yousseuf said Eritrea sought to escalate the situation, and that Eritrea had protested recent U.S. military "maneuvers" with Djibouti. Initial aerial patrols of the border by the French military have not/not been able to confirm the presence of any large troop concentrations near Dumeira, although the Djiboutian military has been placed on alert and is reportedly dispatching troops toward the area. Given the small size and limited capabilities of the Djiboutian military, a significant confrontation is unlikely without French military support. Post EAC has reviewed tripwires and believes its current security posture is adequate. END SUMMARY.

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ERITREAN MILITARY OUTPOST ON DJIBOUTIAN TERRITORY  
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12. (S) Djiboutian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Yousseuf contacted Charge on the afternoon of April 17 to protest what he characterized as an escalation by Eritrea, and to urge that the USG and France use its good offices to raise concern with the Eritrean government (GSE). FM Yousseuf said he was informing the USG and France of the following:

-- FM Yousseuf said that on April 15, he had summoned Eritrean Ambassador to Djibouti Mohamed Said Mantay, in order to protest ER's establishment of an "advanced military post" at Dumeira. (NOTE: Dumeira is located within Djibouti, near the northernmost border between Djibouti and Eritrea, adjacent to the Bab al Mandab strait. END NOTE.) According to FM Yousseuf, some 20-25 Eritrean troops were manning the post, which he asserted was on Djiboutian territory.

-- FM Yousseuf DJ FM said that Eritrean Ambassador Mantay had subsequently responded to the GODJ that the Eritrean military outpost was on Eritrean, not Djiboutian, territory. Furthermore, the Eritrean ambassador had reportedly stated that the GSE was "upset with U.S. military maneuvers with Djibouti", and that the USG was seeking to destabilize

Eritrea. (NOTE: USMC's 22nd MEU, or Marine Expeditionary Unit, conducted routine live-fire and amphibious landing exercises at Djibouti's Godoria Range several weeks ago. Godoria Range is approximately 35 miles from the border with Eritrea. END NOTE.) The ER ambassador also reportedly complained of the presence of Ethiopian arms and heavy equipment at Mousali Island (NFI).

13. (S) FM Youssouf expressed concern that Eritrea was escalating the situation, and cited the presence of 3,000 Eritrean troops near Eritrea's border with Djibouti, just "behind" Eritrea's military post at Dumeira. Youssouf appealed for the USG and France to exercise their good offices to protest Eritrea's action, and urged that the U.S. military be "on alert."

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FRENCH MILITARY REPORTS NO/NO TROOP CONCENTRATION AT BORDER  
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14. (C) French Ambassador to Djibouti Dominique Decherf said that while he had to take note of the assertions by Djibouti's Foreign Minister, French military observers in the field had not/not seen any concentration of Eritrean troops along the border with Djibouti. He said French fixed-wing aircraft dispatched to the area on April 17 "did not see anything conclusive," and did not/not see massive troop concentrations along the border. Decherf said French military helicopters would return to the area for a second look.

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DJIBOUTIAN MILITARY ON ALERT  
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15. (C) Decherf reported that the Djiboutian military along the border had been placed on alert, especially in the Moussa Ali area (i.e., in the northeast, inland border area between Djibouti and Eritrea). No French forces were along the border, he said.

16. (S) GRPO reports that Deputy Director of the Djiboutian National Security Service (NSS) Abdillahi Mohamed Abdillahi confirmed that the Djiboutian military was on alert, and that Djiboutian troops were proceeding to the Dumeira area "to guide our brothers back" (i.e., to Eritrea). Separately, Djiboutian navy contacts informed Post's NCIS representative that the Djiboutian military was dispatching one of its 12 boats to Dumeira (likely a USG-supplied 55-foot patrol boat).

17. (C) Post convened Emergency Action Committee (EAC) and determined that our current security posture is adequate. Post is not aware of any Amcits in the vicinity of Dumeira, but is informing Amcit wardens in Obock to exercise caution. Post has also alerted Embassy Asmara, as well as senior leadership of the U.S. military's Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), representing over 2,200 U.S. forces stationed in Djibouti. Post will not issue a consular warden notice at this time, noting existing restrictions and admonitions against any travel in Djibouti north of Obock. Post has requested additional security at the privately run Horizon Fuel Terminal, in Djibouti city, as the U.S.S. Kanawha refueling platform is due to dock there on April 18.

18. (C) COMMENT. FM Youssouf first raised concern about the Eritrean military post on Djiboutian territory in an April 16 meeting with AF/E Director James Knight, noting that Eritrea had occupied the same area in 1994 (reftel). It is unknown whether the border between Djibouti and Eritrea, near Dumeira, is demarcated. Moreover, the presence of Eritrean troops in that area would not be unusual, due to its proximity to the strategic Eritrean port of Assab, long coveted by Ethiopia. While the Djiboutian military is on

alert, exact numbers of Djiboutian military units, if any, proceeding north toward Dumeira, are currently unknown. The small size and limited capabilities of the Djiboutian military make a significant military confrontation unlikely; Djibouti relies on the presence of nearly 2,800 French troops (comprising two battalions, one of French marines and the other of the French Foreign Legion) for its territorial defense, under treaties predating its 1977 independence. Post will continue to monitor the situation closely. END COMMENT.  
WONG